

Chapter 22

Collective Behavior and Social Movements

Chapter Outline

- Characteristics of Collective Behavior
- Riots
- Collective Preoccupations
- Social Movements
- Diversity, Globalization and Social Change

Characteristics of Collective Behavior

1. Represent the actions of groups of people, not individuals.
2. Involve relationships that arise in unusual circumstances.
3. Capture the changing elements of society more than other forms of social action.

Characteristics of Collective Behavior

4. May mark the beginnings of more organized social behavior.
5. Exhibit patterned behavior, not the irrational behavior of crazed individuals.
6. Usually appear to be highly emotional, even volatile.

Characteristics of Collective Behavior

7. Involve people communicating extensively through rumors.
8. Are often associated with efforts to achieve social change.

Polling Question

- Have you ever participated in an organized protest?
A.) Yes
B.) No

Crowds

- Crowds are one form of collective behavior.
- Crowds share several characteristics:
 - Crowds involve groups of people coming together in face-to-face or visual space with one another.
 - Crowds are transitory.
 - Crowds are volatile.
 - Crowds usually have a sense of urgency.

The Social Structure of Crowds

- Crowds are usually “circular,” surrounding the object of the crowd's attention.
- The people closest to the crowd's center of interest are the core of the crowd and show the greatest focus on the object of interest.
- At the outer edges of the crowd, attention is less focused.

Emergent Norm Theory

- Postulates that people faced with an unusual situation can create meanings that define and direct the situation.
- Group norms govern collective behavior, but the norms that are obeyed are newly created as the group responds to its new situation.
- Members of the group follow norms—they just may be created on the spot.

Panic

- A *panic* is behavior that occurs when people in a group suddenly become concerned for their safety.
- People tend to flee in groups, often stopping to look out for one another.
- We know, for example, that in the World Trade Center on 9/11, people for the most part tried to leave in an orderly fashion.

Panic: Three Factors

1. A perceived threat.
The threat is usually perceived as so imminent that there is no time to do anything but flee.
2. A sense of possible entrapment.
3. A failure of front-to-rear communication.
People at the rear of the crowd exert strong physical or psychological pressure to advance toward the goal.

Riots

- Sociologists see riots as a multitude of small crowd actions spread over a particular geographic area, where the crowd is directed at a particular target.
- Riots occur when groups of people band together to express a collective grievance or when groups are provoked by anger or excitement.

Polling Question

- Civil disobedience is better to use than militant activity for groups to get their point across for social change.
- A.) Strongly agree
- B.) Agree somewhat
- C.) Unsure
- D.) Disagree somewhat
- E.) Strongly disagree

Social Conditions that Cause Riots to Erupt

- Riots are likely to occur in cities with economic deprivation of racial-ethnic minority groups.
- Riots are most likely to occur in cities where grievances of the rioting group have not been addressed.
- A rapid influx of new populations is a common characteristic of cities where riots take place.
- Whether a group has resources to initiate and sustain rebellious activity influences the development of riots.

What Stops Riots?

1. The original goals of the protest groups may have been satisfied.
2. The actions of social control agents may end violence.
3. Riots and violence may end when the political situation changes.
4. Some have argued that discontent can be regulated by the expansion of relief services.

Collective Preoccupations

- Forms of collective behavior wherein many people, over a broad social spectrum, engage in similar behavior and have a shared definition of their behavior as needed to bring social change or to identify their place in the society.

Fads

- *Fads* may be products (scooters, hula hoops, yo-yos), activities (streaking, raves), words or phrases (yo!, whatever, cool), or popular heroes (Harry Potter, Barbie).
- Fads provide a sense of unity among their participants and a sense of differentiation between participants and nonparticipants.
- *Crazes* are similar to fads except that they tend to represent more intense involvement for participants.

Hysterical Contagions

- Involves the spread of symptoms of an illness among a group when there is no physiological disease present.
- Most likely to occur when it provides a way of coping with a situation that cannot be handled in the usual ways.

Scapegoating

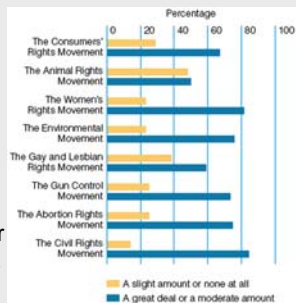
- Occurs when a group collectively identifies another group as a threat to the perceived social order and incorrectly blames the other group for problems they have not caused.
- The group so identified becomes the target of negative actions that can range from ridicule to imprisonment, extreme violence, and even death.

Social Movements

- A social movement is an organized social group that acts with continuity and coordination to promote or resist change in society or other social units.
- Social movements are the most organized form of collective behavior, and they tend to be the most sustained.
- They often have a connection to the past, and they tend to become organized in coherent social organizations.

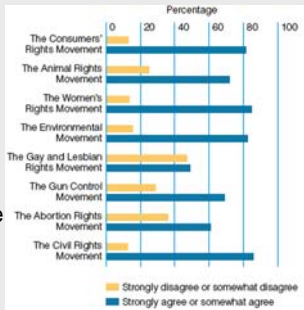
Social Movements: What the Public Perceives

- **Question:**
For each of the following social movements, please tell me how much of an impact you think it has had on our nation's policies.



Social Movements: What the Public Perceives

- **Question:** Regardless of how much impact, if any, each movement has had, please tell me if you personally agree or disagree with its goals.



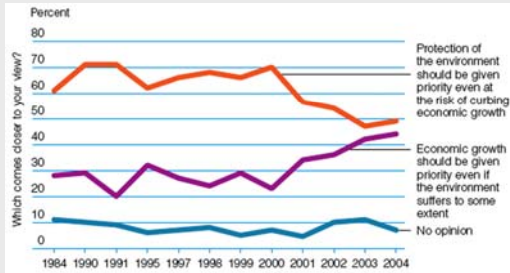
Type of Social Movements

- Personal transformation movements - hippie, new age
- Social change movements - environmental and animal rights movements
- Reactionary movements - Aryan Nation, Right-to-Life

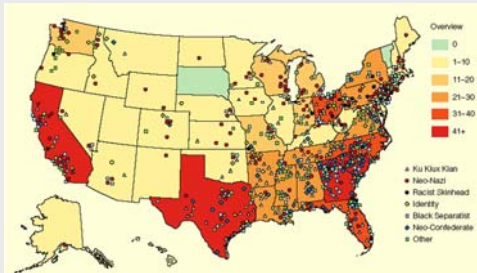
Elements Necessary for Social Movements

1. Pre-existing communication network.
2. Pre-existing grievance.
3. Precipitating incident.
4. Ability to mobilize.

Competing and Changing Views



Hate Groups in the U.S.



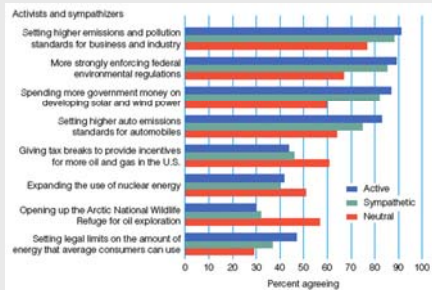
Theories of Social Movement

What does the theory emphasize?	
Resource Mobilization	Linkages among groups within a movement
Political Process	Vulnerability of political system to social protest
New Social Movement	Interconnection between social structural and cultural perspectives

Theories of Social Movements

How do social movements start?	
Resource Mobilization	People organize movements by using money, knowledge, skills
Political Process	Movements exploit social structural opportunities.
New Social Movement	New forms of identity are created as people participate in movements

Movement: Activists and Sympathizers



Globalization, Diversity and Social Movements

- Social movements can be the basis of revolutionary change.
- Some movements originating in one nation also spill over to affect movements in another.
- Transnational social movements have organizational structures that cross national borders.
- Some of the most profound changes in the United States were the result of social movements from our diverse population.

Quick Quiz

1. _____ refers to behavior that occurs when the usual social conventions are suspended and people collectively establish new norms of behavior in response to an emerging situation.
- a. mass behavior
 - b. social movements
 - c. collective behavior
 - d. groupthink

Answer: c

- **Collective behavior** refers to behavior that occurs when the usual social conventions are suspended and people collectively establish new norms of behavior in response to an emerging situation.

2. Groups that act with some continuity and organization to promote or resist change in society are called:

- a. cultural change
- b. social movements
- c. collective behavior
- d. mass behavior

Answer : b

- Groups that act with some continuity and organization to promote or resist change in society are called **social movements**.

3. Three main factors characterize panic-producing situations. Which of the following factors is not one of them?

- a. lack of immediate support
- b. failure of front-to-rear communication
- c. perceived threat
- d. possible entrapment

Answer: a

- Three main factors characterize panic-producing situations. **Lack of immediate support** is not one of them.

4. _____ is the process by which social movements and their leaders secure people and resources for the movement.

- a. Conspicuous consumption
- b. Radical grievance
- c. Scapegoating
- d. Mobilization

Answer: d

- **Mobilization** is the process by which social movements and their leaders secure people and resources for the movement.
